

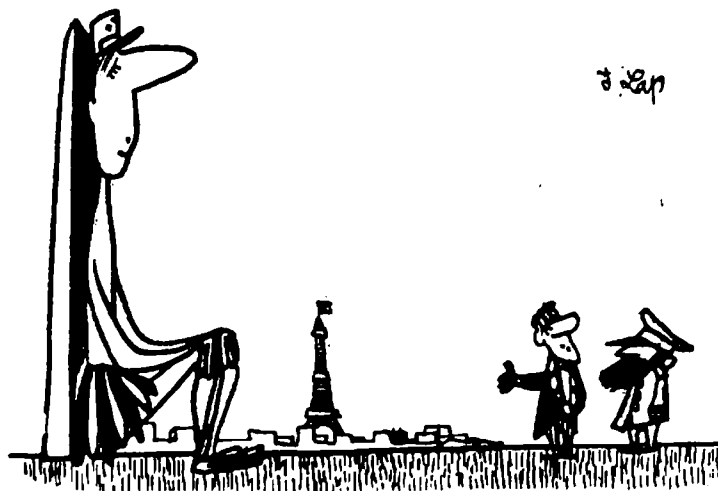
• Abroad •

Tokyo, Japan. No one outside Japan has ever seen a Japanese tourist. Incredible as this statement may seem in an era when tourism has reached the scale of continuous mass migrations, it is nevertheless literally true. Under Japanese law, no Japanese citizen may travel abroad for touristic reasons. No passports are issued except for trips proved necessary to foreign trade or government missions. Except for airline personnel and a few hundred businessmen with active branches abroad, even these conditioned passports are valid for one trip only. An ordinary Japanese cannot purchase foreign currency, nor can he even pay in yen for a passage abroad in a Japanese ship or plane. The very few students and "cultural travelers" allowed to go abroad with foreign currency are selected by strict governmental examinations. The wish to conserve foreign exchange is given as explanation for these restrictions—tighter than anywhere else in the world except Communist China. But this is belied by the great improvement in Japan's reserve position over the past three years, with no loosening on travel. The causes seem to be deep down in the ancient tradition of Japanese egocentrism and isolationism that became well-known in the Tokugawa period. Some Western observers are concerned at what it may symbolize about the basic present Japanese attitude toward the outside world.

Paris, France. There are signs that the drastic measures of devaluation and fiscal reform taken last winter are about to meet their first major domestic test. The reform seemed to be an amazing success, in large part because, until a few weeks ago, prices kept stable in spite of the devaluation. Now pressures for price increases are appearing from both industry and agriculture. The government has already abandoned its resolve to let prices find their natural market level through supply and demand, and has again set official ceiling prices. New sanctions have been declared against ceiling violations, and the imprisonment of several price offenders has been prominently publicized. In the background is an approaching battle by the trade unions, particularly those in the state-run enterprises, for higher wages which, the government fears, would restart the price-wage inflationary spiral.

Bonn, Germany. The fluidity and dynamism of postwar Western Germany has been strikingly shown by a restless wandering of its peoples—who have, indeed, ever since they entered history in Roman times, always tended to move about, expand and contract in rolling waves. During the past eight years—a period that excludes the forced migrations of the eastern refugees—more than 30 million West Germans, 60 per cent of the population, have changed residence. The big cities (Düsseldorf, Munich, Hamburg) have become much bigger; smaller cities (Würzburg, Mainz) have become big; towns have become cities, and few villages remain without at least a small industry. The

redistribution of industry resulting from the division of the country, and the steps in integrating the refugees are responsible for many moves, along with the active strides up the prosperity ladder that have brought many a German from cellar to room to flat to house. But the urge to keep moving seems beyond economics, as is suggested by German tourism, which is the most intense in the world: over five million Germans went to Italy last year, and millions more to France, Spain and everywhere else.



Le Canard Enchaîné

"Dear King of Kings, here is our President of Presidents!"

Geneva, Switzerland. Several thoughtful economists are giving renewed attention to a problem that has been a mystery ever since Stalin launched his Gold Rush program in 1928: Why does Russia devote such enormous effort to the production of gold? The answer has been wrapped in darker obscurity than ever by recent studies of the cost of the Russian gold production. This is now estimated to average \$166 an ounce on the basis of the official exchange value of four rubles per dollar, which means something like \$500 an ounce, taking the ruble at its real value. Set against the U.S. gold price of \$35 an ounce—at which sum foreign nations can purchase all the gold they want from the U.S.—it seems economically insane for Russia to produce gold at such a cost. The current estimate for the total Russian gold stock—the figure is a carefully guarded state secret—is from eight to nine billion dollars. This makes it the largest in the world, since the U.S. physical stock of \$20 billion is offset by foreign balances against it totaling about \$16 million.

Oxford, England. Mrs. Grace Wyndham Goldie, assistant head of talks (as her title runs) for BBC Television, confessed to an audience of adult education workers gathered at Wadham College, her grave apprehension about her medium. The source of her worry: a new BBC survey which showed, a) that political broadcasts were, hands down, the most unpopular of all television programs; and b) that viewers aged 15-19 considered all politicians to be "phoney" and all politics a "bore." With TV now functioning in 56 countries (including Saudi Arabia and Korea), Mrs. Goldie concluded majestically: "I don't think the world is focusing enough attention on the problem."

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